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LETTER DATED 2 JULY 1997 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey to you the attached letter, dated 2 July 1997, which I have received from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations. Attached to the letter is the eighth fortnightly report on the multinational protection force for Albania, as requested by the Security Council in resolutions 1101 (1997) of 28 March 1997 and 1114 (1997) of 19 June 1997.

I should appreciate your bringing the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Letter dated 2 July 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit the eighth report on the multinational protection force for Albania. This report is submitted pursuant to the requirement set out in paragraph 9 of Security Council resolution 1114 (1997) of 19 June 1997, in which the Council requested the Member States participating in the multinational protection force to provide periodic reports, at least every two weeks, through the Secretary-General, to the Council. The seventh such report was conveyed to you on 27 June 1997 (see S/1997/501).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and the eighth report circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Giulio TERZI
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Appendix

Eighth report to the Security Council on the operation of the multinational protection force in Albania

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 28 March 1997, the Security Council adopted resolution 1101 (1997), in paragraph 2 of which it welcomed the offer made by certain Member States to establish a temporary and limited multinational protection force to facilitate the safe and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance and to help create a secure environment for the missions of international organizations in Albania, including those providing humanitarian assistance.

2. On 19 June 1997, the Security Council adopted resolution 1114 (1997), in paragraph 2 of which it welcomed the readiness of the countries contributing to the multinational protection force to maintain their military contingents in Albania for a limited time. In paragraph 3 of the resolution the Security Council welcomed the intention of the countries contributing to the multinational protection force to continue to facilitate the safe and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance and to help create a secure environment for the missions of international organizations in Albania, including those providing humanitarian assistance. It also took note of all the elements contained in the sixth report on the operation of the multinational protection force in Albania, concerning, inter alia, the electoral monitoring mission of the Office for Democratic Institutional and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It decided that the operation would be limited to a period of 45 days from 28 June 1997.

3. In both resolutions the Security Council requested the Member States participating in the multinational protection force to provide periodic reports to the Council through the Secretary-General, at least every two weeks. The first seven reports on the operation of the multinational protection force were provided on 9 and 25 April, 9 and 23 May, and 6, 13 and 26 June 1997.

4. This is the eighth such report to the Security Council on the operation of the multinational protection force in Albania and the second report submitted to the Council pursuant to paragraph 9 of resolution 1114 (1997). The present report refers to the role of the multinational protection force in helping to ensure a safe and secure environment for the OSCE monitoring teams during the electoral operations on 29 June 1997.

II. MULTINATIONAL PROTECTION FORCE

A. Political guidance

5. The Steering Committee, consisting of the political directors of the 11 troop-contributing countries, and the Commander of the operation, continues to follow the overall situation on the ground and the full compliance of the activities of the force with the Security Council mandate. It had meetings on

4, 9, 14, 23 and 30 April, 6, 13, 14 and 22 May, 4, 10, 20 and 25 June and 2 July 1997. On 29 June, the Steering Committee remained in permanent session in Rome from the opening of the polling stations to the conclusion of the voting operations in Albania in direct contact with the force headquarters in Tirana and in particular with the special office set up in Tirana in coordination with OSCE/ODIHR.

6. Representatives of the following international organizations attended the meetings of the Steering Committee as observers as appropriate: United Nations, OSCE, European Union, Western European Union and International Committee of the Red Cross.

B. Cooperation with Albanian authorities

7. A representative of the Government of Albania attended the Steering Committee session on 29 June and 2 July.

C. Cooperation with international organizations

8. In its meeting on 25 June 1997, the Steering Committee decided that a special office would be set up in Tirana at the force headquarters to follow the developments of the electoral operations in the country, in cooperation with the Albanian authorities and OSCE.

9. The force is helping to create a secure environment for the electoral process, in particular for the OSCE-ODIHR missions, within the framework of the Security Council mandate.

D. Force deployment

10. Before and during the electoral process, the force has extended its deployment virtually throughout the country and acquired further visibility, intensifying reconnaissance, patrolling and escort missions.

11. For the specific purpose of providing security for the OSCE monitoring teams and the parliamentary observers during the electoral process, an increase in strength of the force up to 7,215 units was considered necessary. On 29 June, the overall deployment of the force was as follows: Austria, 110; Belgium, 14; Denmark, 56; Greece, 797; Italy, 3,778; France, 938; Portugal, 1 aircraft crew; Romania, 398; Slovenia, 24; Spain, 342; and Turkey, 758.

12. During the electoral process, the force provided protection to the OSCE monitoring teams, according to the situation, either indirectly, within the enlarged security framework (in most of the country), or directly, providing escorts on a case-by-case basis (in the rest of the country). More than 3,500 kilometres of roads were patrolled in addition to the specific task of escorting the OSCE observer teams which were distributed throughout the various areas of the country as follows: 15 in Gjirokaster and Sarande, 25 in Pogradec and Korce, 15 in Vlore, 14 in Peshkopi, 12 in Shkoder, 12 in Lezhe, 5 in Berat,

11 in Lushnjë, 18 in Fier, 16 in Elbasan, 33 in Durres and Kavaje, and 62 in Tirana and Kruje.

13. The force has granted medical assistance at its military compounds, offered accommodation to 372 observers (302 in the force garrisons and 70 on board the Italian ship "San Giorgio" in Durres) and provided communications personnel in order to facilitate links between different OSCE missions and central headquarters.

14. During the electoral days, the force employed 1,800 men for escorts and 2,200 for patrols, strong points and garrison tasks, leaving 600 men on reserve.

15. The force offered transportation facilities, both by car and by helicopter, to the senior OSCE representatives and the Council of Europe official who visited Tirana, Shkodier, Berat, Korce and Gjirokaster on 29 June to hear accounts of the voting from the international observers and Albanian electoral officials.

III. CONCLUSIONS

16. Despite growing tensions on the eve of the elections, no incidents involving the OSCE monitors were reported on election day. Some violence did, however, occur, specifically the killing of a political leader in Kurian near Fier that may have been linked to the electoral process. There was also an armed attack against the Greek General Consulate in Gjirokaster, as a result of which a member of its local staff was killed.

17. The force has been committed to help create a secure environment and the best possible conditions for the holding of regular and fair elections.

18. In some cases the force had to intervene. In Dvijake, near Durres, armed gunmen stole ballot papers in a polling station but the local police, with the help of the force, succeeded in rescuing the stolen items. Equally, in Lashinje the ballot boxes were stolen in two polling stations at the end of the day and the force had to intervene to rescue them. In Vlore and in Tirana armed gangs surrounded the local polling stations at the end of the voting process and the force had to intervene to avoid incidents.

19. The relatively high turnout of voters was also attributable to the security framework provided by the force. The presence of the force also contributed to the fact that observers were for the most part granted access to all stages of the voting without interference or intimidation.

20. It is the view of the Steering Committee that the electoral operations on 29 June were generally run in a smooth way, given the local circumstances. For further observations on the electoral operations, the Steering Committee refers to the statement delivered on 2 July by Mme. Catherine Lalumiere, OSCE Special Coordinator for the Albanian Parliamentary Elections.